108. Education.

Mr. N. G. Parameswaran Pillai (Member, T. I. C., Mavelikara) first reiterated his request for the establishment of a Second Grade College in Central Travancore and then submitted his representation for starting an English school for girls at Mavelikara for which the necessity had been felt for some years. About 100 girls were now studying in the two English High schools at Mavelikara which ought to be some indication as to the real necessity for an English school. The grievance of the people in that matter had been placed before the Assembly during the past 7 years. The Educational authorities had been approached and the Sirkar building which was once used for the Salt Bankshall was available for the present till a *pucca* building was put up. The Inspectress of Girls' schools had also been shown the building.

The Dewan said that his information was that the people had agreed to put up a building at their cost and to take one on rent till the construction of the building.

The Member replied that the building they promised was for a Second Grade College and not for a Girls' school for which they could contribute not less than Rs. 1,000 or one-third of the total cost at the most. The Member added that the matter had been brought to the notice of the Dewan also when he went to Oachira for the Exhibition.

The Member then made his observations on the desirability of introducing certain reforms in the Education Department.

It was an admitted fact that, during the past 10 years, vast progress had been made in the spread of education at considerable cost for which the people were grateful to Government. But the question was whether the benefit reaped was proportionate to the large expenditure already met. There was poverty in the land and it had to be seriously considered whether that poverty was on the increase or decrease with the spread of so much education. Another feature of that education was the growing number of school-children from the depresed classes such as Pulayas, Parayas and the working or artisan classes. One positive evil was that the children of those classes abandoned their ancestral trade or calling and thought it *infra dig* to follow it and did not equip themselves with that kind of education and training which would maintain them in life. There was the other inevitable evil of a large army of young men waiting for jobs. The only relief measure which could be taken was the introduction of industries in schools as compulsory subjects of study. The next question was, where industrial education should begin. Some were of opinion that it should begin from class V of the Vernacular schools. The Member's plea was that such an industrial training should commence from class II and should include manual training, drawing, clay-modelling, paper-cutting, basket-making, &c., and also elementary lessons in agriculture with practical training in an agricultural farm. The pupils in classes V, VI and VII should be given such industrial training as the local conditions would require. The standard for such an industrial training in an English school should be Form II or III, but in the latter case the training should be made compulsory. Those who showed special aptitude for a literary course in class VII or Form III and who had to leave off studies should be educated in that line in a separate industrial school. For that purpose, there should be at least one Technical school for each taluk.

The practice of educating boys and girls in the same class of a Vernacular Higher Grade school should be stopped for several obvious reasons. The separate Lower Grade Vernacular schools for girls should be abolished, as the girls could be educated with boys till class IV. Above that grade, the number of Girls' schools having classes V, VI and VII should be increased and it should be made a rule that no girls should be allowed to be taught with boys in the Higher Grade Vernacular schools. As it was a matter of great convenience to the people to have their girls educated with boys in the Lower Grade Vernacular schools, provision should be made for Music and Sewing being taught in those schools.

Sanskrit should be made a compulsory subject in classes VI and VII of Vernacular schools.

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With the present number of Assistant Inspectors it was not possible to conduct inspection work efficiently. According to the G. O. issued, each Assistant Inspector need not inspect more than 50 schools, but in practical work he had to inspect 135 schools in a year which was impossible of achievement. So, the number of Assistant Inspectors should be increased. It was not necessary to appoint B. A., L. T's. The selection could be made from competent Head Masters of Higher Grade Vernacular schools.

It was necessary to enrich the Malayalam language and literature and for that purpose competent scholars should be engaged to prepare good books, especially on scientific subjects.

The present system of changing text-books annually was a source of great hardship to the people. It should be peremptorily stopped.

Dewan's reply.—In regard to the opening of an English school for girls, if the people are agreeable to provide a building on a Government site to be given them and would also rent out a building till the new building is constructed, their prayer will be favourably considered. It is understood that the Salt Bankshall building is unsuitable for a school-house, as the site will be under water for some months in the year. The Members representations will be referred to the Director of Public Instruction.

109. The administration of the Education Department of the State, with special reference to the Vernacular branch.

Mr. N. Kumaran Asan (Member, Nominated) premised by saying that the high percentage of 82·4 as representing the school-going population actually under instruction was a great achievement, as that high level had not been reached elsewhere. The fact that such a large ratio was attained during the past 4 or 5 years was gratefully remembered by the people as also the circumstance that most of the schools in the State were now open to all classes of His Highness' subjects irrespective of caste or creed.

A large portion of the heavy expenditure on public instruction being devoted rightly to Vernacular education, it was desirable to look into the system of Vernacular education and find out if there were defects so that they might be removed with a view to promote a wider spread of that education.

At present there were 352 Vernacular schools for girls and 2,316 Vernacular schools for boys. The former were under the control of one Inspectress and 6 Assistant Inspectresses, while the controlling authorities of the latter were 1 Deputy Director of Public Instruction, 2 Range Inspectors and 22 Assistant Inspectors, the Director being the common head of the two classes of schools. Out of about 1,14,000 girl pupils in the State 67,151 were in Boys' schools. That being the case, it was highly desirable in the interests of mass education to place all Lower Grade Vernacular schools (for boys and girls) under one supervising officer. The pupils in class V and upwards would be comparatively older—both boys and girls. It was, therefore, necessary to give them such education as would suit each sex, as co-education from class V should not be allowed. Domestic Economy, First Aid, Music, Sewing, etc., should be taught in the Girls' schools and the subjects of study for the boys should be necessarily different. Out of 264 Higher Grade Vernacular schools, 184 had both girls and boys in them. That was because there were only 77 Higher Grade schools for girls in the whole State. The policy should be to separate Girls' schools from Boys' schools from class V upwards.

It was not possible for one Assistant Inspector to inspect more than 50 schools in a year. But the average number of schools to be inspected was about 150 which was difficult of accomplishment. It was not necessary that the Assistant Inspectors should all of them be B. A., L. T's for conducting the work of inspection of lower grade schools. Head Masters of Higher Grade Vernacular schools who were able to carry out that task and who had a sound knowledge of the language and literature would quite do and, if they could be appointed under some such designation as Inspecting School Masters or Sub-Assistant Inspectors, the Lower Grade schools would be better inspected and a hard-worked lot of public servants would have some encouragement.

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